

LOBBYING AND GIFT REFORM

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, there has been a lot of talk on the House side this week about the bills they have passed as a part of their so-called Contract With America. I have my own views about many of those bills.

But today, I would like to talk about what was not included in the so-called contract. The contract does not include campaign finance reform legislation, it does not include lobbying disclosure legislation, and it does not include gift reform legislation. So, on the three biggest political reform issues facing the Congress today, the Contract With America is silent. The House of Representatives has been silent. We in the Senate have also been silent. We have done nothing to address these fundamental problems with the way business is done in Washington today.

We tried to bring these issues up in January, but we were told that that the new Republican leadership wanted some time, wanted a chance to govern. Action would come in a few months, we were told.

Well, we have waited more than 3 months, and there is no sign of any serious effort to enact lobbying and gift reform. No hearings have been scheduled, there have been no mark-ups, and no effort has been made to bring a bill to the Senate floor.

If anything, it appears that we have been moving in the wrong direction on political reform. Special interest seems to be more influential than ever. Every week, we read new stories about how special interest lobbyists have written bills, and have been invited into committee rooms to brief congressional staff about what those bills would do.

Reform of the Federal lobbying laws and of the congressional gift rules is too important to wait any longer. This should not be hard. My lobbying reform and gift reform bills each received 95 votes in the Senate in the last Congress.

It was only when the conference report got caught up in a last-minute filibuster that we were unable to finally pass lobbying registration reform and gift reform.

Our existing lobbying registration laws have been characterized by the Department of Justice as ineffective, inadequate, and unenforceable; they breed disrespect for the law because they are so widely ignored; they have been a sham and a shambles since they were first enacted almost 50 years ago. At a time when the American public is increasingly skeptical that their government really belongs to them, our lobbying registration laws have become a joke, leaving more professional lobbyists unregistered than registered.

My lobbying reform bill would ensure that we finally know who is paying how much to whom, to lobby what Federal agencies and congressional committees on what issues. This bill would close the loopholes in existing lobbying registration laws. It would cover all professional lobbyists, whether they

are lawyers or non-lawyers, in-house or independent, whether they lobby Congress or the executive branch, and whether their clients are for-profit or non-profit. It would streamline reporting requirements and eliminate unnecessary paperwork. And it would provide, for the first time, effective administration and enforcement of disclosure requirements by an independent office.

The congressional gift rules are also fundamentally flawed. These rules currently permit Members and staff to accept unlimited meals from lobbyists or anybody else. They permit the acceptance of football tickets, baseball tickets, opera tickets, and theater tickets. They permit Members and staff to travel to predominantly recreational events, such as charitable golf and tennis tournaments, which are paid for by special interest groups. To the public, these rules reinforce an image of a Congress more closely tied to the special interests than to the public interest. That is not good for the Congress and it is not good for the country.

Our bill would address this problem as well. Under our bill, lobbyists would be prohibited from providing meals, entertainment, travel, or virtually anything else of value to Members of Congress and congressional staff. Acceptance of gifts from others would also be restricted significantly. To give just one example, my bill would prohibit private interests from paying for recreational expenses, such as greens fees, for Members of Congress, whether in Washington or in the course of travel outside Washington. In fact, private interests would be prohibited from paying for congressional travel to any event, the activities of which are substantially recreational in nature. If my bill passes, recreational activities paid for by interest groups will be a thing of the past.

The enactment of our bill would fundamentally change the way business is conducted on Capitol Hill. It would get rid of the gifts, and it would bring lobbying out in the open. If we are serious about changing the way government works, we will enact this legislation, and do it soon.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COATS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the pending amendment is set aside.

AMENDMENT NO. 569 TO AMENDMENT NO. 420

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Washington [Mr. GORTON] proposes an amendment numbered 569 to amendment No. 420.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

On page 17 of amendment 420, strike lines 14 through 17.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, this is the first of a series of five minor amendments to the Interior section of this rescission bill which had been worked out in each case with all of the affected parties, including the chairman and ranking minority members of authorizing committees where they include authorizing language.

Their first amendment deletes a proposed \$3 million rescission of funds available to the Fish and Wildlife Service in the Endangered Species Act, and it is placed at this point because such a rescission and certain set of restrictions proposed on the Defense supplemental by the distinguished junior Senator from Texas has now been accepted as a part of that conference committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the amendment? If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment of the Senator from Washington.

The amendment (No. 569) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 570 TO AMENDMENT NO. 420

(Purpose: To allow grazing permits, that expired in 1994 and in 1995 before the date of enactment and were not replaced due to NEPA requirements, to be reinstated or extended)

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the pending amendment will be set aside, and the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Washington [Mr. GORTON] proposes an amendment numbered 570 to amendment No. 420.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

On page 26, after line 2, insert the following: "This section shall only apply to permits that were not extended or replaced with a new term grazing permit solely because the analysis required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et